

Making Inferences With Biography

Directions:

1. Think about what you know about Thomas Jefferson. Then read the passage about him, focusing on the purpose for reading.
2. Use "Elements in a Biography" from your handout, Guidelines for Making Inferences With Nonfiction Texts, to help you infer as you answer the questions following the selection.

Purpose for Reading: To learn about Jefferson's problems with money.

Through the years, Thomas's income had never been enough to cover his expenses. He had gone deeper and deeper into debt. And now he was in danger of losing Monticello.

To raise money, Thomas had sold one of the things he loved most—his library. The U.S. Congress bought the six thousand books in it for \$25,000. The books were added to the nation's library, the Library of Congress in Washington.

The money from Congress helped, but Thomas's debts had continued to mount. Now he feared he would have to sell every piece of property he owned to pay his creditors. And then he would have nothing to leave his family.

News of his troubles spread, and the people all across the country were shocked. How could such a thing be happening to Thomas Jefferson? Committees in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and other cities raised thousands of dollars for Thomas. Smaller gifts came from the farms and villages in both North and South, and outposts on the Western frontier.

(from Thomas Jefferson: A Picture-Book Biography, pages 37–39)

- A. Why did the people of the United States send money to Jefferson? Use details in this selection and your background knowledge to support your inferences.

- B. How do you think Jefferson felt about having to sell his library? Infer two different emotions he may have felt and support each with details from the selection.

Making Inferences With Informational Texts

Directions:

1. Think about how land can change, both from human actions and natural events; then read the passages, focusing on the purposes for reading.
2. Use "Inferring With Informational Texts" from your handout, Guidelines for Making Inferences With Nonfiction Texts, to help you answer the questions following each passage.

Purpose for Reading: To discover ways human beings change the land.

Do people help build up the land?

Yes. In Holland, for instance, the government built dikes to hold back the sea. The windmills on the dikes pumped water from the farmland into the ocean. This helped provide more land for farmers to raise crops. In Asia and in many other places, farmers build terraces on steep mountain slopes to catch rainwater and prevent it from washing away the soil. The flat strips of land are used for growing rice and other foods.

Workers plant trees to keep soil from blowing away. They also plant bushes at the edges of deserts. The bushes stop deserts from getting bigger.

(from *Are Mountains Growing Taller?* page 45)

- A. Why do people change the land? Use details in the selection and your background knowledge to support your inference.

Purpose for Reading: To learn about the destruction caused by volcanoes.

Can volcanoes destroy islands?

Yes. In 1883, a volcano erupted on the small island of Krakatau in the South Pacific. The ferocious explosion tore the island apart. It flung some 5 cubic miles of rock and soil into the sea. Krakatau shrank to only one-fourth of its previous size!

(from *Are Mountains Growing Taller?* page 22)

- B. Use the questions to make inferences: What does it say? What does this information mean? Why is this information important?